

DL

1150

H22r

A  
A  
0  
0  
0  
3  
5  
3  
9  
8  
7  
1



ON  
NATIONAL  
SPELLING REFORM  
A LETTER TO  
LORD BEACONSFIELD.

*Ex Libris*

C. K. OGDEN



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/rationalspelling00harl>

E.

# RATIONAL SPELLING:

A

CONSERVATIVE SCHEME FOR NATIONAL  
SPELLING REFORM.

A

LETTER ADDRESSED

TO

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD,  
PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND.

BY

• DR. GEORGE HARLEY, F.R.S.,

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF BAVARIA; OF THE ACADEMY  
OF MEDICINE OF MADRID; FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE PARISIAN MEDICAL  
SOCIETY; AND PROFESSOR IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

LONDON:

Printed and Published for the Author by

C. F. HODGSON & SON, GOUGH SQUARE,  
FLEET STREET, E.C.

1878.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY C. F. HODGSON AND SON,

GOUGH SQUARE, FLEET STREET.

PE  
1150  
H22 2

## RATIONAL SPELLING.

---

*To the Right Honorable the Earl of Beaconsfield.*

MY LORD,—

There is no truer fact in statecraft than that the social history of a nation invariably repeats itself; and therefore it will not surprise, though it may interest you to learn, that the question to which I am now about to call your attention, namely, one appertaining to the linguistic development of the nation, was already in the early part of the last century, in a precisely similar manner to that in which I am now doing, brought under the consideration of the then Ministry. Strange to say, the same philological drama as is now being acted, was already enacted in England 167 years ago. The cast of the piece, even to its details, being exactly the same. The names of the actors are alone changed.

1. In the month of February, 1711, as now in the month of February, 1878, a British subject, feeling the inestimable advantages that would inevitably accrue to the mental development of the community by the simplification of its language, appealed to the Government for its aid in bringing about so desirable an end.

2. The appeal was then, as now, made during the time that a Queen, and a good Queen, occupied the throne. The name only of the Queen is changed—from that of Queen Anne to that of Queen Victoria.

3. The Prime Minister was then, as now, selected as the medium to which to apply the motive power; but, instead of his name being, as in 1711, Robert Harley, it is at present Benjamin Disraeli.

4. Another point of resemblance in the respective positions of these two Ministers may probably suggest itself to the mind of the intelligent reader, and furnish it with additional proof that every important step in the public career of a great man has almost invariably had, in the career of another, an exactly corresponding antecedent. As will be recollected, both of the above-named Prime Ministers received from the hands of a Queen a national recognition of their services to the State in the shape of an Earldom.

5. Now, as then, it was in the capacity of a private citizen that the would-be reformer of the incongruities of the English language approached the Government; and his name, instead of being, as in 1711, Jonathan Swift, is, in 1878, George Harley.

6. The appeal made 167 years ago was precisely the same as is made now; namely, for the appointment of a Royal Commission.

7. The appeal, indeed, might be even now couched in the identical words as were employed on the previous occasion; namely, for the "Ascertaining, Correcting, and Improving of the English Tongue."\*

8. In the words of Dean Swift, the appeal then made was for the appointment of a committee of "such men as would be generally allowed to be the best qualified for such work, without any regard being paid to their quality, party, or profession." It was further suggested by the acute Dean, that it would be advisable to place the Committee "under the protection of a Prince, with the countenance and encouragement of the Ministry." To which he wisely added, that if the labors

---

\* *Vide* Sir Walter Scott's 1824 Edition of Dean Swift's Works, vol. ix., pp. 137—139.



of such a Committee were brought to a successful issue, "it would not only contribute to the honor of her Majesty's reign, but deserve to be recorded in words more durable than brass,"—a remark equally applicable to the reign of our worthy Queen, as it was to that of Queen Anne.

9. Another striking similarity in the two cases is, that now, as in those days, men learned in the organization of the English language stigmatize it, in almost the identical words of Dean Swift, as being "extremely imperfect, . . . offending in many cases against every part of grammar," . . . and "being less refined than the languages of either Italy, Spain, or France." These, the words of Swift, are indeed the very same as are now used by Spelling Reformers of the present day, notwithstanding that an interval of 167 years divides their application. This circumstance can create no surprise in the minds of the initiated, for it requires the possession of no superhuman amount of sagacity to be conversant with the fact that the inconsistencies of English orthography are not only a stumbling block in the path of primary education, but a potent impediment in the way of the diffusion of knowledge.

10. By a very simple arithmetical calculation, it may be ascertained that the simplification of English Spelling would be a direct pecuniary saving to the British community of millions of pounds sterling per annum; while to the national exchequer it would amount to little less than half a million per annum in educational matters alone.

11. But beyond all this there lies a still far greater problem to the solution of which the simplification of English Spelling will materially contribute. For there cannot be a shadow of doubt that, if the English language continues to spread itself over the surface of the globe at the same rate as it has done during the last hundred years, it only requires the simplification of its orthography to make it become in time the universally spoken language of civilized men. As a striking

proof of the cogency of this remark, it may be mentioned that within the last few years an astute nationality in the Eastern Hemisphere—which in all probability is destined to play as important a part in the future civilization of the East as Great Britain has already played in the civilization of the West—while reforming its social system, took into consideration the advantages likely to accrue to it from the adoption of English as its national language; and it was chiefly from discovering the defects in its orthographical organization, and becoming conscious of the impediments which these defects throw in the way of the diffusion of knowledge, that the government of Japan abandoned the idea of adopting English as its national language,—a circumstance all the more to be regretted, seeing that the obstructive blemishes lie within the reach of easy removal.

12. It is by no means improbable that, were the English language rendered easy of acquirement by foreigners, by the removal of its most glaring orthographical inconsistencies, not only Japan but other nations—like the Chinese—in the possession of defective and unwieldy languages, would soon, for their own sakes, be led to adopt it. This can scarcely be regarded as a mere chimerical fancy, seeing that, during the Middle Ages, a desire of a precisely similar kind existed in Europe, when the monks and other learned men made strenuous efforts to make the language of ancient Rome the universal written and spoken language of educated Europe. Had, indeed, the Latin of the Romans of 2000 years ago been a less imperfect language than it was, I should not now be writing this in English. For it is more than probable that the language of ancient Rome would be at this very moment the vernacular of every country in Europe,—and what might have been the career in modern Europe of the language of the conquering legions of ancient Rome, had it but been simplified to meet the requirements of the times, I desire to foreshadow as the future career of the improved language of Great

Britain over the entire civilized surface of the globe. This is no Utopian idea. A glance at our Colonies, a *résumé* of the part now being played by the English language in the towns in North America, Australia, New Zealand, on the coasts of South America, Africa, and Asia, plainly points to the future destiny of the English tongue, if it be only brought within the reach of easy acquirement by foreign races. On the contrary, however, if English orthography be allowed to remain in its present imperfect state, we venture to predict that its ultimate fate will not fail to be one whit less ignoble than that of ancient Roman Latin, which in consequence of its imperfections has been gradually and quietly shunted from the path of progress, till at length it has, as a spoken language, become a houseless and homeless wanderer on the face of the earth. Even Rome itself, its birthplace and its nursery, has long since repudiated its services, and accepted in their stead those of its less defective and more manageable scion, Italian. As has been the fate of Latin in the past, so will be the fate of English in the future, if its house be not put in order and adapted to the requirements of the times. For education will not much longer submit to the fetters of its imperfections; and, unless it speedily yields itself to the wants of the age, modern spoken English, like ancient spoken Latin, will in the course of time find that the place that once knew it will know it no more.

12. Just as the rolling snow-ball increases in size, and in power, the further it proceeds from its point of departure; so in like manner has the question of English Spelling Reform gained in actual bulk and intrinsic importance since the days when it was first rocked in its infantile cradle by the learned hands of Dr. Gil—the Tutor of Milton—no less than two hundred and fifty-nine years ago. Then it was but a feeble suckling, bound up in swaddling clothes; now it is a full-grown stripling, ready to perform its appropriate part in the affairs of life; and it only requires countenance and

encouragement to become a potent lever in universal social development. It may, indeed, with perfect justice be said, that it will not do for the Government of this country to continue much longer to ignore its claims to consideration ; for there is a destiny in language as in every thing else, which awaits not the beck and call of frail human mortals. Blind although many may yet be to the fact, it is nevertheless a discernible fact, that the time has gone by in the history of civilization when the governors of a nation can complacently fold their hands on their knees and say, "Let things be," "What did for our forefathers ought equally well to do for us." Railways, telegraphs, and telephones have changed, and are changing, the whole relations of civilized society ; and what was sufficient for the wants of our forefathers, two hundred, or even one hundred years ago, are insufficient for ours now, and will be still less sufficient for the requirements of our successors. Mechanical language—the language which transmits from man to man knowledge by means of pencil, pen, type, or telegraph—requires simplification, and it is with the view of attaining to this end that I have ventured to thus address you. Feeling, as I do, that the social well-being of millions upon millions of the yet unborn must be materially influenced by the apathy or activity with which the question of Spelling Reform is handled in this the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

15. The social cry of the age is for knowledge—more knowledge. The wail of the child is for the simplification of the means of acquiring education, and the duty of the government is to give heed to both. It is of little use to force poor children into national schools, if the means we employ to instruct them are beyond their mental capacity, unless their intellects be subjected to a pernicious amount of mental strain. 'Tis scandalous that so-called educated men continue to perpetuate tortures on immature intellects by forcing them to acquire a knowledge of absurdities—a system of education alike derogatory to common sense and humanity. Let those who know

nothing, and understand still less, of the organization and the requirements of language, listen to those who have given sufficient time to the mastering of its secrets. No one wishes that every scheme of Spelling Reform, emanating from the brains of sanguine enthusiasts, should be accepted and acted upon. All that sensible men ask, is that the Government of the nation should appoint a Commission of competent persons, as Dean Swift proposed, to investigate the organization of the language, and draw up a practical scheme by which might be removed from the path of growing education, and the general diffusion of knowledge, the mass of unnecessary obstacles which now needlessly infest it. In the following pages I shall attempt to indicate one line at least of easy practical reform; and if after its perusal you should consider, as I and many others do, that it is the bounden duty of the Government, in the interests of national and social well-being, to entertain the question of Spelling Reform by the appointment of a Royal Commission, I venture to prophesy that Liberals as well as Conservatives will, in the end, unite in giving thanks to the present Ministry for their efforts thus made in advancing the cause of civilization. You, my Lord, may rest assured,—1st, That the fruit is ripe;—2nd, That there are already a sufficiency of able laborers in the field;—3rd, That the tree only requires to be shaken in order to make it yield the harvest;—and 4th, That the Prime Minister of England, who grasps the golden opportunity now within his reach, in this the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to simplify the English language, will prove himself alike to be the champion of the nation's honor and the pioneer of advancing civilization.

Faithfully yours,

GEORGE HARLEY.

25, HARLEY STREET.

CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON.



REMARKS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF INTRODUCING  
A  
CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL SCHEME  
OF  
RATIONAL SPELLING REFORM.

---

N.B.—In the following pages we shall give a practical exposition of the mode of working of the first section of our scheme—which consists in the omission of duplicated consonants (doubled *b's*, *l's*, *t's*, &c.) from all words except personal names—so that our readers will be able to judge for themselves, not only of its practicability, but of its more immediate merits, as regards its facilitating education, and thereby directly contributing to the intellectual development of the nation.

---

We think it may with perfect justice be affirmed that, no matter how much the ideas of the educated portion of the British nation differ in questions of politics, properly so called, on all social questions it is, as a body, essentially conservative. This fact may be gleaned from its inveterate adherence to old customs, as well as its tenacious attachment to useless old things.

Every sudden attempt made to change, under the name of reform, any of our national patriarchal manners or customs is invariably fruitless,—as fruitless almost as would be an attempt to place a pyramid on its apex instead of on its base.

Yet, notwithstanding the truthfulness of this assertion, it is an equally undoubted fact, that public opinion is at the while as unstable as water—as changeable as a fluctuating quantity in mathematics—or, better still, as ceaseless in its movements as the minute hand of a clock (which it most closely resembles); for, while ever gyrating, and for ever returning to the same individual points on the face of the dial, it yet never fails to indicate an advanced stage in the march of time.

It is precisely the same with public opinion. Although ever and anon are revived among the novelties of the day the long since exploded opinions of the past, the revivals are not merely resuscitations of *efete mater*, but actual regenerations of old material in a new form—which as incontrovertibly point to a new phase in the intellectual development of a nation, as each succeeding return of the clock's minute-hand to the varied hour-markings, points to a new epoch of time in its onward march towards eternity.

In most things public opinion changes slowly,—so slowly, indeed, that the transition movement is almost inappreciable to the mental eye; but in some things, and at other times, it suddenly flies from one extreme to another, like the hands of a weather-cock,—so abrupt, so sharp, so decided being its pirouette, as not inaptly to merit the title of a mental revolution. Such appears to be now the case with public opinion as regards things educational.

After having listlessly slumbered for centuries, the nation has suddenly woke up to a consciousness of the necessity of reforming its educational system.

The introduction of public examinations and school boards has produced the startling discovery that something is even radically wrong in the spelling of its language. It appears rapidly becoming conscious of the fact that the anomalies of English orthography might with perfect truth, though with less politeness, be logically denominated absurdities—a humbling thought to national pride.

Every man moving in literary society is cognizant of the fact that a marvelous change has, within the last few years, taken place in the mind of the intellectual class regarding English orthography. For while scarcely more than five years ago, when an advanced thinker, by any chance, mooted the subject of spelling reform in a mixed society during an after-dinner conversation, he instantly had either a deaf ear turned on his remarks, or if he succeeded in obtaining a few brief minutes' attention, was speedily mentally sat upon, and mercilessly snubbed for his temerity in daring to raise a voice of complaint against what his associates considered the beautiful, logical, and perfect English language,—whose spelling had, presumedly, been placed on an unalterable foundation by the labors of the great lexicographer Dr. Johnson, against whom to raise a word of complaint was not only regarded as a species of high treason, but philological blasphemy.



Things are changed; and it is now found, that when an intellectual man indulges in learned criticisms on the philological inconsistencies of the mother tongue, he finds eager listeners, whose attention does not even abate when he ventures to propound a remedy for the evil: facts sufficient to prove that, in the minds of the educated, the question of spelling reform has emerged from the ethereal regions of desirability into the tangible realms of practicability. It seems consequently to be no longer a doubtful question with the enlightened, if English orthography requires a thorough overhauling; but merely, how its recognized defects can be most easily and most speedily got rid of.

The most salient orthographical blemishes in the language recognized by the thinking part of the educated class are:—

I. That the present system of spelling is a direct impediment to education in primary schools, by unnecessarily prolonging the mechanical drudgery of learning to read and write.

II. That it hampers the distribution of knowledge through the mechanical instrumentality of pen and press.

III. While from these two propositions it follows, as a natural corollary, that the defective system of English spelling is detrimental to the intellectual development of the nation.

Presuming that the readers of these pages are all prepared to admit the correctness of these statements, and that they are also alive to the desirability of spelling reform, we shall at once proceed to show what is in our opinion the easiest, and therefore the best, plan of procedure for its attainment.

First and foremost, as it is a wise mother-axiom which advises everyone who desires to obtain anything, to take the preliminary step of clearly ascertaining what he actually wants before entering upon its pursuit, we have taken the trouble of doing so, and the result of our enquiry may be given as follows.

Our ultimate object being nothing more nor less than to facilitate the intellectual development of the people, we desire to find a ready means:—

1. Of accelerating the acquirement of a knowledge of reading and writing the English language by children and illiterate adults.

2. Of facilitating the distribution of knowledge among all grades of persons in the community.

3. Well knowing that no absolutely perfect scheme of orthographical reform is practicable in the present state of society, we desire to attempt only to remove from the language the most ob-

jectionable of its inconsistencies; that is to say, those which are admitted by educated men to be not only direct impediments in the way of primary education, but obstructive agents in the spread of knowledge, as well as of its perpetuation through the instrumentality of physical agents, such as the pen and the press.

4. We desire that, in the introduction of any system of literary reform, great care should be taken to avoid as much as possible giving personal inconvenience to any member of the community.

5. We are anxious that the reform should not alone be a personal advantage to every man, woman, and child in the nation; but likewise a pecuniary benefit, individually and collectively, by diminishing time, labor, and material in the acquirement of education, in the spread of information, and in the perpetuation of knowledge.

6. We desire that the present system of literature should be changed as little as possible; so that the new may be able to proceed side by side and hand in hand with the old system, at the option of the more conservative portion of society; neither system interfering with the independent working of the other.

7. We wish the reform to be one which, although it might be universally adopted by all succeeding generations of Anglo-Saxon speaking people, would not render useless to them the priceless treasures of modern English literature, which have been accumulating on the shelves of our libraries during the last three centuries.

8. While being careful to facilitate the acquirement of education in primary schools, and to avoid causing inconvenience to the adult portion of the community, we desire that every word in the language, when possible, should be shortened; so as to entail a minimum expenditure of vital power in its vocal utterance, as well as of manual labor in its mechanical employment by pen and press. For, although brevity in expression is not always compatible with lucidity in argument, brevity in spelling invariably conduces to conciseness and exactitude, without being incompatible with euphony; while the greater the number of ideas that can be lucidly expressed in the smallest compass has the additional advantage of reducing the bulk of our books as well as the size of our libraries.

With these eight salient propositions kept clearly in view, we shall now attempt to sketch out a scheme of spelling reform, which we trust will make itself acceptable to the majority of educated men in the nation.

Not being, however, of that happy class of sanguine individuals who expect to find perfection in anything human, we do not promise to propound a perfect scheme of reform. For that we believe to be utterly impossible. All that we venture to promise is, that we shall advance, for the consideration of thinking men, a thoroughly practicable scheme, which, without being detrimental to the interests of the present generation of adults, will be of great educational value to all future generations engaged in acquiring a knowledge of reading and writing the English language. Beyond that we do not pretend to go. As extreme views in all questions appertaining to social life are objectionable, and often do actual harm by exciting opposition, we may at once show our true colors, by remarking that we think that the ultra-school of spelling reformers are at present doing great injury to the cause they desire to advocate. For, from being over-convinced that their way is the right way, they fail in making sufficient allowance for the prejudices of those who are not sufficiently super-acute-minded as to be able to perceive and appreciate the overwhelming advantages which are said to exist in the ultra-schemes of spelling reform. Hence the ultra-reformers have already succeeded in stirring up a great amount of opposition,—so great, indeed, that the boat of spelling reform is already almost swamped between the struggles of its admirers and detractors. And as has happened in the case of the question of the Decimal system, the angel of conciliation threatens to spread her wings, fly away, and leave the disputants in a helpless state of dead-lock. It is with this knowledge that we have entered the field of spelling reform, and, as may be perceived from the tenor of these remarks, our object in writing this essay is to try and bring about a philosophic compromise, not only among the partizans of the reform movement themselves, but with the out-and-out opponents to all schemes of national spelling reform.

We enter upon the execution of our self-imposed duty with a certain degree of trepidation, from the consciousness that, if we act justly to our readers, we shall require to give a fearless critique of the opinions of able and conscientious men, whose views on the subject of spelling reform are diametrically opposed to our own; and our space being limited, we shall require to put ourselves in the position rather of a judge than of an advocate. However, by sacrificing perhaps a little of lucidity in favor of brevity, we may be able to place impartially before our readers the more salient points of the different schemes. And by adhering to a strict

impartiality, we hope to render our exposition, though brief, sufficiently explicit to enable them to form a correct estimate of the merits of the respective methods of spelling reform, and thereby enable them to distinguish the one to which they ought to lend a helping hand, as philanthropists anxious to advance the intellectual interests of future generations.

As the schemes are too numerous to admit of our examining them individually, we shall form them into groups,—which fortunately is very easy, as they naturally divide themselves into three distinct and well marked classes.

(1.) Those which may appropriately be denominated “Alphabetic”; as their chief characteristic is, that they propose a change in the number of letters in the alphabet.

(2.) The “Phonetic,” with equal propriety so called, as they are all founded upon the principle of spelling every word in the language in exact conformity with its most general form of pronunciation, without however making any change in the alphabet.

(3.) The last class, consisting of eight separate schemes—MacArthur’s, Sprague’s, Jones’s, Rundell’s, Moon’s, Fleay’s, and our own—may be called the “Rational,” as it is essentially founded on the philosophic principle of simplification; neither meditating a change in the number of letters in the alphabet, nor making any attempt to render the spelling of every word in the language absolutely phonetic, while it at the same time promises to be equally effective as a means of accelerating mental development.

There is yet another scheme, which although denominated the Vox or Voice Alphabet, does not come exactly into this category; for, strictly speaking, it is not alphabetic, as it only meditates giving different values to the present alphabetical letters by a system of digraphs, while it at the same time spells the words in close conformity to the schemes in the third class. If, therefore, its proposal to employ digraphs be abandoned, which we consider ought to be done, the scheme might be appropriately added to those in the third, which we call the Rational class. The Vox alphabet is the design of Mr. H. Holt Butterfill.

The advantages and disadvantages of each set of schemes will now be considered; but only in a national point of view, and quite irrespective of their philological attributes, with which for the present we have nothing to do, as our readers are capable of estimating them perfectly well without our dilating upon them.

As regard the first class of schemes, much may be said in its favor. Its chief feature of novelty is an increase in the number

of letters in the alphabet, increasing them from 26 to about 40; on the grounds that at the present moment some of the letters of the alphabet have to do duty for four, and even five distinct sounds, and are consequently a fallacious index to pronunciation. With about forty letters it is believed that each individual letter will be limited to the expression of one particular sound; so that there may be no ambiguity in the pronunciation of words spelt with the enlarged alphabet.

In theory, this scheme of reforming the language is unexceptionable, and in practice would come as near the verge of perfection as any human scheme could possibly do; yet, as far as we can ascertain, it has more opponents, among the intellectual class, than all the other schemes put together; for the simple reason that from such a sweeping scheme of reform ordinarily educated men of middle age shrink in dismay. They have no desire to begin and learn another and more complex form of alphabet than what they already know; they tremble at the very thought of having to begin a course of spelling anew; while, to a certain extent, they dread the prospect of having their visual organs offended by the abnormal appearance which words spelt in a new form of alphabetic letters are likely to present. Alas! these are, however, but the least formidable of the obstacles in the way to the introduction of a new form of alphabet. A vastly graver source of objection yet remains; namely, that the introduction of such a scheme would inevitably render the priceless English literature of the last three hundred years of no avail to future generations. None, except the few who had inclination or time to devote special study to the cetera language would be able to decipher the writings of our Shakespeares, Miltons, Walter Scotts, Newtons, Herschels, Byrons, Dickenses, and Macaulays. For every book printed before the introduction of the new alphabet would appear to them to be written in an unknown tongue.

Who amongst us, with antiquarian tastes, but without a special education in black letter, has not found cause to wince under the torture of having to decipher it, and mentally resented the want of wisdom in our forefathers in having altered their system of writing to such an extent, that the literature of the nation, dating antecedent to the introduction of the present form (close upon four hundred years) is utterly unintelligible to the ordinarily educated Englishman. For although we have ample reason to rejoice that the change was made, as the advantages of the reformed system far overbalance its literary inconveniences,

one cannot help regretting that the reformation was so sweeping in its character as to prevent the ordinarily educated among us, at the present day, from reading, without infinite trouble, the literature of olden times.

Great as is the loss which we feel, 'tis yet but a mere drop in the bucket in comparison to the loss which all future generations of Englishmen, without a special education, would sustain by not being able to read works published before the introduction of the new form of alphabet. Our vast stores of English literature in the British Museum, University, and other national libraries would be rendered by it about as useful to future generations as the records on Cleopatra's needle and the tombs of Thebes are to us at present. We know, to our cost, the disadvantages of employing an expert in the deciphering of old English. His brain never seems to be able to supply the want of ours. Plenty of material he supplies us with for the money, but his budget generally contains a quantity of matter which is to us useless. His ideas and ours on the value of historic questions do not always accord; and we are forced to begrudge the pounds, shillings, and pence which are consequently unnecessarily paid away. Just as it is with us now, we fear that it would be with the majority of persons in the future anxious to consult works written with our present alphabet, after they had learned only the other. These objections by themselves, putting entirely aside all the perplexing annoyances which the introduction of a new form of alphabet would inevitably cause to the present generation, are found to be sufficient to stamp this mode of spelling reform with the brand of disapprobation. For no one with any feelings of philanthropy wishes to perpetuate upon his successors, misfortunes similar to those he himself labors under, from the blunder committed by his ancestors in so completely changing the old black-letter system when introducing the one now in every-day use.

Let us now place, side by side with these misfortunes, the anticipated advantages to be derived from the introduction of an extended alphabet.

The Alphabetic schemes specially aim, as already said, at obtaining a separate letter of the alphabet for every distinct vocal sound utterable by the human voice. And in addition to this, they meditate the employment of similarly formed letters to indicate similar vocal sounds, in order to facilitate the acquirement of a correct knowledge of them, as well as to facilitate their retention in the memory, and consequently rapid application.

From this it is seen that the main benefit to be derived from the Alphabetic system consists in the fact that the introduction of new letters would reduce to a minimum the labor of acquiring an exact knowledge of English orthography, and thus save time in the acquirement of a knowledge of reading and writing. Aded to this, the new letters would afford the additional advantage of inducing a slight abbreviation in the length of words, and consequently, to a certain extent, economise time in writing and printing, as well as pens, ink, and paper. The new alphabet would, however, only do this to a very moderate extent.

These are all the tangible advantages which this class of scheme presents to our minds; and if Alphabetic reformers have no more potent ones to advance in its favor, we can scarcely believe that they can be so oblivious of the drawbacks attached to the practical introduction of this class of scheme, as to try and force its adoption on the nation; the actual advantages arising from its adoption being quite insignificant in comparison to the disadvantages it would inevitably entail.

One word more has yet to be added, regarding the proposal of increasing the number of letters in the alphabet, and it is one of no mean importance. Namely—that in order to improve English orthography, it is not necessary that any addition whatever be made to the number of letters in the alphabet; but only that more, or at least a better class of brains be employed in the re-arrangement of those we already possess. For we believe that every vocal sound, utterable by the human voice, may be correctly indicated by the present twenty-six letters, if they are only judiciously and intelligibly arranged. At any rate, we shall attempt to prove in the scheme of Rational spelling which we propose to give in the sequel, that the pronunciation of every word may be correctly interpreted, if the vowels in them be disposed according to the principles of philosophic law.

In order to give our readers the opportunity of seeing a sample of words spelt and printed according to the newly proposed form of extended alphabet, we subjoin a paragraph printed with the new form of type kindly lent to us by Mr. George Withers of Liverpool, and thereby our readers will have the opportunity of judging for themselves of the probable advantages likely to arise from its national adoption:—

“Dar iz in de *Enlqvjd Iyglif Alfabet*, hwot dar ot tuu be in everi Alfabet, wuu sju for eg distijet Elementari Sönd in de luygwaj;

and if, in rĭtĭj and printĭj, eġ sĭn or leter wer qzđ tu indicat onli its on wun sŕnd, az in dis spesĭmen, Core t Pronunsiatŕfun wud be fasilitated; Lernĭj tu Spel and tu Red wud be amuj de eziest ov atanments, insted ov, az at prezent, amuj de most difĭcult; and Rĭtĭj wud be restord tu hwot it woz orĭjinali intended tu be—a fatful reprezentatŕfun ov de Sŕndz ov spoecen wurdz. De qs ov sug an Alfabet and simp'l mō l ov Spelĭj, wud be eewal tu de adifun ov several yerz tu de secul period ov everi ġĭld; and no wun nēd be widst de abiliti tu red."

As the paragraph speaks for itself we at once pas on to the consideration of the next clas of schemes.

The second or Phonetic clas of schemes specialy aims, like the Alphabetic, at rendering the spelĭng of every word in the language in exact conformity to its pronounciation, difering from it however in the means by which it proposes to attain this end. Phonetic schemes meditate no increase to the number of leters already existing in the alphabet, but merely a remodeling of the form of their employment so as to enable the spelĭng to indicate the exact sound of the word.

The Phonetic has thus a direct advantage over the Alphabetic schemes in necessitating no alphabetic or chirographic re-education whatever, and in entailing no fresh investment by printers of new leter-type.

The idea of introducing such a system of spelĭng is no novel one, for Mr. Major, of the British Museum, showed us a book on the subject actualy published in London in the year 1619, advocating the adoption of a system of phonetic English spelĭng. The book is adressed to King James, and was written by Alexander Gil, Head Master of St. Paul's School (the Tutor of John Milton). And not alone was Gil, at that early period, disatisfied with the defective national orthography, but other educated men, about the same time, raised their voices against it, as apears from the inovations in the system of English spelĭng proposed by Charles Butler in his English Gramar, published in 1634; in Fœnimi's Monarchie (1634), and Principles of Music (1636), to which our atention has been directed by Mr. R. Garnett. All these books are to be found in the Grenville Library of the British Museum.

Before atempting to gauge the value of the Phonetic schemes, we must ask our readers to bear in mind the important fact that al language was originaly written on phonetic principles—that is to



say, in exact accordance with the aural capabilities of the writers. And still further, words only ceased to be true phonetic representatives of pronunciation when, in the course of time, the pronunciation became altered from what it was originally, while the original form of spelling was adhered to. Yet further, it must be borne in mind, that at no time in history was the pronunciation of words the same in all the counties of England, nor did there ever at any time exist a universal single form of national phonetic spelling, for the very simple reason that such was impossible. For what was perfectly phonetic orthography in one county was absolutely non-phonetic to another. Moreover, as the pronunciation of English words at the present day is not uniform, even among educated people, who inhabit different parts of Great Britain, and still more, as the pronunciation of words varies from generation to generation, as well as in locality to locality, phonetic spelling can never possibly be stereotyped. It will, and must, ever vary.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary for us to reduce this last proposition to axiomatic certainty, or it may excite cavil.

We shall choose for our illustration one single word, and in order that it may be devoid of all ambiguity, instead of selecting an ordinary word, we shall choose a phonetically spelt family name; and as our own possesses all the requirements necessary for a crucial exposition of the point, we shall offer it for consideration, on the grounds that we are most familiar with its origin and history, and consequently less likely to fall into error in our exposition.

*Harley*, being a name of only two syllables, and each possessing a distinct and well marked vocal sound, might be supposed to present a difficulty to write non-phonetically. Not so, however—quite the contrary,—for in a parish register, which we have had occasion personally to consult, and which dates from 1620, we find that during the 209 years that the baptisms of the members of the family have been recorded by a succession of different parish clerks, there occurs a strange variation in the spelling of this simple name. As is well known, little attention was in olden times paid to a uniformity in the spelling of family names, and each parish clerk was in the habit of registering the name as it appeared to him to be pronounced—that is to say, phonetically. And what has been the result with the easily pronounced and easily spelt name of *Harley*? Nothing more nor less than that it has been written as *Harley*, *Harlei*, *Harlie*, *Harla*, *Harlai*, *Harlay*, and *Harlaw*. Every one of these forms of spelling being the undoubted representative of a

member of the same family, which has dwelt in the same locality for generations, even before the register was begun.

After such a crucial example as this, how is it possible for anyone to believe in the possibility of introducing a stereotyped form of phonetic spelling? So long as pronunciation is a fluctuating quantity, the introduction of a stereotyped form of phonetic spelling we regard to be about as chimerical an idea as that of expecting a uniform series of pictures to occur in a kaleidoscope.

This is not, however, the only form of objection which presents itself to our minds against the successful introduction of purely phonetic schemes of spelling reform. There is, to our way of thinking, another potent obstacle to the national introduction of correct phonetic spelling; which, originating as it does in an organic defect in the human cerebral organs themselves, is incurable, and consequently insurmountable. The physical cause which we now allude to, exists in the different degrees of acuteness in detecting and recording the value of vocal tones posessed by different individuals.

Phonetic spelling being founded on the principles of euphony alone, in order to obtain uniformity in spelling, it is essential that universal harmony should exist in the aural organs. For if that be wanting, even although the pronunciation of the words is perfectly and clearly defined to every member of a community in any particular locality, the difference in pitch of the musical tones posessed by persons' ears will produce an appreciable difference in the phonetic spelling of their words, as is well seen in the spelling of children and illiterate adults.

No two sets of ears are exactly alike, no more than two human faces are identical; and we have ascertained by experiment that a difference in the quality of the musical ear is almost invariably associated with a different capacity for phonetic spelling. Anyone can readily put this to the test, by asking a mixed company of persons, of about the same mental calibre and education, to write phonetically any ordinary word of more than two distinct syllabic tones. Should there be in the company some persons with acute, and some with obtuse musical ears, we prophesy that a startling revelation will be made on the side of phonetics.

It was only the other day that we met with a gentleman who could not distinguish the difference in intonation of *pull*, *pool*, and *pule*. No amount of explanation was capable of making his ears draw a distinction between their sounds, yet, strange to say, this

same person pretended to be able to distinguish a difference in the vocal tone of *rain*, *rein*, and *reign*. This is, perhaps, an extreme case; but there exist plenty of anomalous cases to prove that out of every 100 men there are not to be found above 30 or 40 with anything like what might be called a correct ear for phonetic spelling.

How, then, with such discordant aural elements, can it be reasonably expected to introduce, through the instrumentality of the ear alone, a uniform system of phonetic spelling?

We have no objection to the phonetic system in the abstract; but we deprecate the plan pursued by its advocates of parading its advantages before the eyes of the public, while they are careful to exclude from view its defects. We shall yet point out another of them, which the reformers themselves ought to have made known.

We dare say few will be found to deny that the great object of existence is to get a maximum of advantage at a minimum of cost. Every human contrivance is invented, and applied for this especial end,—a shortening of time, a saving of labor, and an economising of material.

What, we may ask, does the at present proposed form of phonetic spelling, without an increase of letters in the alphabet, involve?

Certainly, no economy; but an actual waste of time and material. It entirely upsets the principles of human economic law; inasmuch as the formation of phonetic words necessitates a greater expenditure of time, and an actual increase of labor, as well as an additional waste of materials. Of course, a chorus of voices exclaim, Oh no! nothing of the kind; you entirely misrepresent its principles. Let us see.

To begin with, let us compare a few of Professor March's newly spelt words with our old ones, and see what they tell us.

Instead of <i>regular</i>	he writes	<i>reg(e)ular</i> .
„ <i>denoting</i>	„	<i>deno(e)ting</i> .
„ <i>making</i>	„	<i>ma(i)king</i> .
„ <i>ultimately</i>	„	<i>ultima(i)tely</i> .
„ <i>changed</i>	„	<i>cha(i)nged</i> .
„ <i>unusual</i>	„	<i>un(e)uz(h)ual</i> .

Let us now turn to our own countryman the well-known reformer who proposes to write his name as *Aleksaander Jon Elis*, and from his *Inglish Speling Glosik* extract (from his first page) the

following words:—*aurder*, *dhi*, *egzem'plifei*, *aartikl*, *akaw'rdenz* *dhoutz*, *dhai*, *prōanunsiaishen*, *oarij'inal*, *dis'rigaw'rde*, *intoo*, *bee*. Of course these words al look strange to the unacustomed eye; a litle reflection may posibly reveal their signification. However, in casesome of our readers may have a difculty in recognizing their old friends in this new garb, we shal reintroduce them as:—*order*, *the*, *exemplify*, *article*, *acordance*, *those*, *they*, *pronunciation*, *original*, *disregarded*, *into*, and *be*.

It apears to us strange that these words should be said to be the corect representatives of phonetic speling, as only the last two of them in the least acord with our ideas of the exact representation of the vocal sounds. No doubt this arises from our not posing an acute musical ear, and it is probably on this account too, that we consider the original form of speling, in al except the last two examples, more phonetic than the so-caled phonetic rendering of the words. Here, then, is a striking example of two educated men not being able to spel similarly on phonetic principles, in consequence of posing diferently constituted ears.

On opening Mr. Ellis's pamphlet, our eyes axidentaly fel upon the sentence begining in the ninth line of page fourteen, and as its apearence somewhat startled us, we here give it exactly as it stands:—

“Konsikwentli dhi unfamil'yer kombinai'shenz aur unfamil'yer koloakai'shenz ov famil'yer kombinai'shens at wuns point out diferensez too bee aten'ded too.”

Our minds must, we fear, be very obtuse; but, somehow or other, no amount of reflection has as yet been able to reveal to our darkened understanding what are the advantages which this mode of speling the language has over that in present use. For the life of us, we canot grasp the idea that the writing *dhi*, *dhis*, and *dhat* would in the slightest degree facilitate the acquirement of a knowledge of speling by children. We are aware that Germans sometimes pronounce *the*, *this*, *that* as *di*, *dis*, *dat*; but we have no recollection of ever having heard anyone, native or foreigner, pronounce them as *dhi*, *dhis*, *dhat*. If such really be the corect phonetic speling of these three litle words, we canot feel in the least degree surprised at the anomalous apearence presented to our uneducated eyes by the before quoted sentence; and we must honestly admit, that we feel ourselves compeled to object to the introduction of such a change, as the above specimen implies, in the orthography of our language.

Instead of giving to it the title of linguistic reformation, we in

our ignorance, if not forewarned, should have unhesitatingly stigmatised it as a species of linguistic deterioration, and that on the following grounds :—

1. Its national introduction would necessitate a complete re-education in orthography to all persons who have already left school.

2. It differs as much from our present form of English spelling as that of the 13th century does.

3. Its adoption by future generations would render our present libraries and literature as unreadable to them as the English writing of 500 years ago is at the present moment to us.

4. If it would simplify, and consequently tend to diminish the difficulty of acquiring education by children, it would certainly be neither to their future, nor to our present advantage, either in economising time, labor, or material in the mechanical transmission of thought by pen and press.

As a nation, like an individual, in making a change in its habits and customs, invariably demands to reap some tangible advantages from it, we cannot help expressing some degree of surprise that the present class of phonetic reformers, with their eyes open to the before pointed out disadvantages in their respective schemes, would hesitate to modify them in such a manner as would diminish the personal inconvenience as well as the pecuniary loss which would be sustained, not only by the present, but by all future generations of English people, by the introduction of such sweeping alterations in the spelling of the language as they at present advocate.

In fact, we believe that, if either one or other of the unmodified phonetic schemes be attempted to be forced upon the nation, it will be rejected *in toto*. For the intellectual portion of the community is quite alive to its own interests, as well as to the interests of succeeding generations, whose noble English literary heritage would be seriously imperiled by the introduction of such radical changes as would be induced in the language, by the at present proposed pure system of phonetic spelling.

On the other hand, we are prepared to affirm, from the opportunity we have had of feeling the national pulse since the publication a few months ago of our little book, with its proposed scheme for the simplification of English spelling,\* that, although

---

\* "The Simplification of English Spelling—specially adapted for the rising generation. An Easy Way of Saving Time in Writing, Printing, and Reading." Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill, E.C.

there does not yet appear to exist a perfect unanimity of opinion regarding the means to be adopted of improving English orthography, and it appears to be so convinced of its urgent necessity, that we believe that, if any really useful, and at the same time practicable scheme of national spelling reform was judiciously laid before them, its appearance would be actually hailed with delight.

The objection raised by educated men against spelling reform arises, we find, in by far the majority of cases, not from their having the slightest objection to spelling reform in the abstract; but solely from what they consider to be preposterous demands made on public convenience by ultra-reformers; who, moreover, are not even agreed among themselves as to which of the rival schemes, which they hustle in a heterogeneous mass before the public gaze, is the most likely to be efficient in facilitating primary education, and accelerating the spread of knowledge among the people.

Reformers must therefore at once begin and set their house in order, for, until they have decided upon giving their united support to one definite plan of reform, no useful practical step can be made. They cannot be so blind as to expect a nation to lend a willing ear to the claims of a multitude of discordant schemes forced upon its attention all at once? Such, however, is their present attempt, and it is almost impossible that it can be otherwise, seeing that in the list of reformers there exists an ultra-class who not only believe that each of their own pet schemes is the best; but that they only require to cry long enough and loud enough to convince everyone else that it is so; forgetting altogether that human minds are not all constituted alike, and that what appears to them but moderate demands, are regarded by others as perfectly exorbitant. No doubt, as every hen is thought to imagine its own egg the whitest, every reformer naturally thinks his own scheme the nicest; but, as all cannot win, it would be well for them at once to begin by splitting their differences, and unite in the support of one good, simple, and practicable scheme, which they might lay before the nation with a fair chance of its being accepted. It may perhaps be advisable for us to throw out the hint, that as far as we have been able to gauge the state of the public mind, it appears to us that, in order to be able to secure the success of any scheme of spelling reform, it is far more essential for it to be one of easy introduction, than of perfect construction. The introduction of a perfect scheme at the present moment we regard as an unattainable Utopian idea, and we would advise

speling reformers to take timely warning by the fate of the decimal system reform scheme which, as is wel known to those behind the scenes, the nation would at this very moment be reaping the practical advantages of, had it not been for the stubborn persistence made in extravagant demands by its ultra-advocates, to whom nothing short of "perfect perfection" was axceptable; and the result is, that this valuable system of reform now lies, if not moribund, at least in a helples state of dead-lock.

Among those whom we consider to merit the title of ultra-speling reformers are Pitman, Ellis, Withers, and March. Consequently it is more particularly to them we make this urgent apeal for moderation and unanimity in action.

We shal now proceed to consider the last group of schemes, which consist of Sprague's, Macarthur's, Jones's, Rundell's, Moon's, Fleay's, and our own. To which, as we said before, were it not for the system of digraphic leters, might be aded Mr. Butterfill's, for, in its system of speling, it is almost identical with the schemes included in this group. They al closely resemble each other in not advocating any adition to the leters of the alphabet, nor the adoption of any ideal system of phonetic speling. Indeed, Sprague has admirably suceeded in proving that nearly every word in the language can be spelt phonetically not only with the ordinary twenty-six leters, but with the same arangement of them, while Macarthur has been equally suksesful, with the fractional diference, that he modifies to some extent the ordinary mode of aplying the vowels.

Although in general principle these schemes agree perfectly with ours, yet there exists between us and them some points of esential diference, arising from the fact that our scheme is solely founded on the basis of natural linguistic evolution and philosophic simplification. Hence, while the other schemes but partially afect duplicated consonants, ours insists on their total abolition from every word in the English language, exept personal names.

Before proceeding to give our scheme in detail, we may remark, that the whole eight schemes are so moderate in constitution, and so simple in aplication, that either one of them might be adopted by the strongest linguistic conservative without the slightest *arrière pensée*. We may further remark that, although our scheme was developed long before we even so much as heard of the existence of the other seven, al of them have proved exceedingly useful to us in pointing out improvements in our details as wel

as in confirming in our minds the great value of entirely framing a National scheme of Reform on philosophical linguistic principles.

As literature has but one solitary object in view—a noble one, the propagation of knowledge—all that it requires of its words is, that they should be the exact symbols of the idea they are intended to represent. Hence, the shorter the word is in which the idea can be with exactitude expressed, the less vocal and manual power is required in its employment; and consequently the more advantageous is it as a symbol of thought to the recipients as well as to the distributors of knowledge.

As a natural corollary to the foregoing, it follows that every extra letter in a word beyond what is absolutely necessary to make it an exact symbol of the idea it is intended to represent, is a disadvantage to the writer, printer, and reader, by imposing on each in turn an unnecessary expenditure of vital power. Therefore, all words should be spelt with the smallest possible number of letters compatible with their correct pronunciation.

Being linguist reformers, not revolutionists,—being liberal-conservatives, not ultra-radicals,—we do not desire to see the organisation of the English language overturned, either by the introduction of an extended alphabet, or of a chimerical system of phonetic spelling. All we desire to do is, to purify the language of its most glaring inconsistencies, and so to simplify its orthography as to confer a personal as well as a pecuniary advantage upon every man, woman, and child writing and reading the Anglo-Saxon language.

Like the feat of making an egg stand upon its end, so skilfully performed by Columbus, we hope to be able to do something nearly as wonderful, by successfully propounding a useful, practical scheme of English Spelling Reform, which will not necessitate the slightest change in the fundamental organisation of the language, a feat which only appears (like that of the egg) to be incredible until its *modus operandi* is revealed.

For the sake of public convenience, the scheme which we are about to propose is divided into three distinct parts, which, at the option of each individual member of the community, may either be adopted and worked separately, or conjointly. Neither part interferes, either with the independent working of the other, or with the present system of orthography. So that all three may with perfect impunity be made to proceed side by side, or even hand in hand, according to the views of the majority of the nation.



The first part of the scheme simply proposes the adoption, in an extended form, of the natural law of English linguistic evolution—the total abolition of al the unnecessary duplicated consonants—*b's, c's, d's, f's, l's, m's, p's, s's, t's, &c. &c.*, from every word in the language, except personal names, as we are illustrating by our present form of writing.

The second part of the scheme proposes, in like maner, a stil further extension of the natural law of linguistic development, by the total abolition of al mute leters, be they vowels or be they consonants; which wil induce a stil further improvement in the shape of shortening, and thereby simplify the spelling of words.

The third and last part of our scheme proposes the adoption of a system of *Rational-speling*. By which we mean the speling of words with the fewest posible number of leters capable of furnishing a coreect index to the pronunciation of the word—the speling of al similar vocal sounds with exactly the same leters of the alphabet,—and the total disuse of the employment of similar leters of the alphabet to denote *unlike* vocal sounds; which of necessity makes the speling a false index to the pronunciation of the word.

With these objects in view, the first part of our scheme insists on the total abolition of doubled *b's, c's, d's, f's, g's, h's, &c.*, from every word in the language except personal names, and we make an exception in their favor solely on the ground that, as every British subject has a legal right to cal himself by what name he wil, he has an equal right to spel his name in whatever maner suits his fancy.

From al ordinary words in the language, however, we would without mercy abolish them as useles incumbrances. Few persons have the slightest conception of the enormous number of duplicated consonants which infest English words. Perhaps it wil surprise some of our readers to learn—

1. That *thirty thousand* of duplicated *b's, c's, d's, f's, g's, h's, l's, m's, &c.*, appear in every ful-sized copy of the daily *Times*; exactly one half (15,000) of which are totaly useles, and, consequently, not only consume a quantity of valuable space, which might be more profitably ocupied, but entail a heavy pecuniary los, by wasting time in the writing, printing, and reading.

2. By a calculation made by means of the post-office statistics, we have ascertained that the coresponding part of the British public, through the instrumentality of leters alone, anually send through the post-office over *twenty thousand millions* of unnecessary

letters of the alphabet; while the millions and millions upon millions, which annually traverse the country by the same means in the shape of printed matter, are beyond all human powers of calculation.

3. We have ascertained, by means of a philological analysis of the writings of different authors, that (contrary to what might have been anticipated) the number of duplicated consonants employed by any English writer stands in a direct inverse ratio to his literary talents,—a startling fact, no doubt, but nevertheless true.

4. By a comparison of the works of different authors, published from the time of the introduction of the printing press into England, up till last year, it is found that, according to a natural law of linguistic evolution, all duplicated consonants, as well as mute consonants and mute vowels, are inevitably doomed to disappear, in the course of time, from the language by a process of natural linguistic elimination.

5. As a natural sequence, all words in the language are gradually becoming abbreviated.

From this it will be seen that the total abolition of duplicated consonants, which we propose, is but the extension of a great natural law in linguistic development, which promises an immense saving in time, labor, and material in the shape of pens, type, ink, and paper. We have met persons who doubt this fact; but we have never failed to silence them, by presenting to their eyes the index of Roget's "Thesaurus" (a dictionary fails to convey a correct idea of the actual number of duplicated consonants in the language), in some of whose pages are to be found whole strings of from 20, 30, 40, and even 50 consecutive words posing duplicated consonants. The marvel to the reflecting mind is—how, and for what purpose they ever got there.

This is the more remarkable from the fact, that the employment of duplicated consonants in English orthography seems to be contrary to the laws of nature. We have ascertained this by a careful examination of words spelt by illiterate adults and children. At this moment there lie on the table before us two letters written by children under nine years of age—a boy and a girl—and two letters written by illiterate servants, over forty years of age—a man and a woman—and only in five words out of the whole four letters do duplicated consonants appear. While they are omitted in the following cases.

<i>missed</i>	spelt	<i>mised.</i>
<i>digging</i>	„	<i>diging.</i>
<i>marriage</i>	„	<i>marriage.</i>
<i>happy</i>	„	<i>hapy.</i>
<i>getting</i>	„	<i>geting.</i>
<i>address</i>	„	<i>adres.</i>
<i>running</i>	„	<i>runing.</i>
<i>opportunity</i>	„	<i>oportunity.</i>
<i>personally</i>	„	<i>personaly.</i>
<i>beginning</i>	„	<i>begining.</i>

Strange to say, these words, with the exception of omitting the duplicated consonants, are actually, in the above instances, spelt correctly. We therefore opine that the employment of duplicated consonants in English words must have another source than that of the unwritten laws of instinct-speling. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that the pronunciation of many words in the language entirely precludes the idea that their orthography was dictated by natural speling. Thus, who could possibly imagine that instinct thrust unnecessarily a mas of duplicated consonants into words such as—

waggon	(wag-on)	= wagon.
doggrel	(dog-rel)	= dogrel.
skittish	(skit-ish)	= skitish.
riff-raff	(rif-raf)	= rif-raf.
fullfill	(ful-fil)	= fulfil.
oppress	(o-pres)	= opres.
address	(a-dres)	= adres.
possesses	(po-ses-es)	= poseses.
stubbornness	(stu-bor-nes)	= stubbornes.
accommodate	(a-com-o-date)	= acomodate.
restiffness	(res-tif-nes)	= restifnes.
suppresses	(su-pres-es)	= supreses.
Mississippi	(Mi-si-si-pi)	= Misisipi.

It may be here remarked that there is only one clas of words which offers an impediment to the plan of omitting duplicated consonants. It is that, posing duplicated c's, such as *accident* and *succeed*, which, when robed of the doubled c, no longer accord with the pronunciation. This difficulty, however, is easily got over, by substituting an *x* for the doubled c, and writing them as *axident* and *suxceed*, which has the additional advantage of bringing them into exact conformity with phonetic law.

The whole nation could, without the slightest inconvenience to

itself, get accustomed to omit all duplicated consonants in the space of a few weeks, as the process is more mechanical than mental, and from personal experience we know that it only requires three days to habituate one to the habit. At first the doubles would slip from our pen whenever our attention was taken away from them; but when they did, we took no note of the circumstance, feeling that it would soon come right of itself, and that the accidental leaving behind of one or two unnecessary doubles was, at first, in a matter of this kind, of so trifling consequence as not to be worthy of a moment's consideration. Our expectations were more than realised; for, to our surprise, by the third day the wilful doubles ceased to annoy us. Strange to say, it was the little word *wel* that troubled us most—we had no difficulty in writing *wil*, but whenever we attempted to write *wel* the doubled *l* would slip from our pen. Probably this had something to do with the sound of *w-e-l*. However, the difficulty being one of a mere mechanical nature soon altogether ceased.

Having found the omission of duplicated consonants easy of practice, and the advantages accruing from it very considerable, we at once adopted it in our correspondence; and, in order to prevent strangers marveling at our curious form of spelling, we have had all our note paper with an N.B. neatly printed in small letters in the left-hand upper corner stating—

Reformed Spelling!

No duplicated consonants

Except in personal names.\*

With duplicated vowels we do not propose to interfere, as they are an essential index to pronunciation. If they were omitted, the signification of words would be in most cases entirely changed.

Thus	<i>good</i>	would become	<i>god.</i>
	<i>been</i>	„ „	<i>ben.</i>
	<i>boot</i>	„ „	<i>bot.</i>
	<i>pop</i>	„ „	<i>pop.</i>
	<i>bet</i>	„ „	<i>bet.</i>
	<i>soon</i>	„ „	<i>son.</i>

After the abolition of duplicated consonants has been successfully achieved, the next step we propose, still following in the career of natural linguistic evolution, is to get rid of all mute letters, vowels

---

\* Paper with this heading is kept for sale, ready in stock, by Dorrell & Co., Stationers, 15, Charing Cross, S.W.

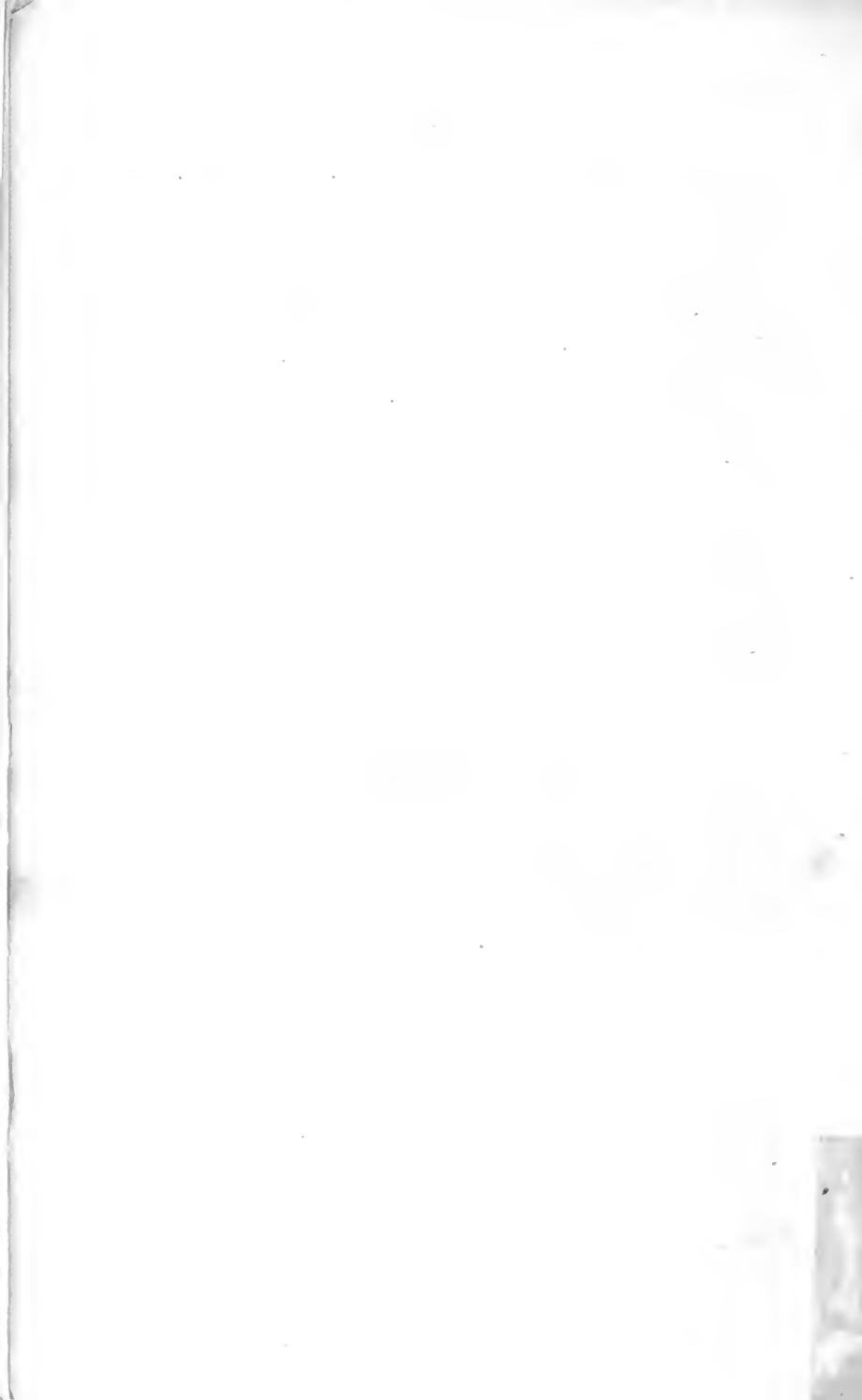
as wel as consonants, of which there are an immense number in the English language. From a calculation we have made of the unecesary duplicated consonants, and mute leters, we have ascertained that on an average the actual saving wil be about one leter in every three words. A smal proportion, perhaps, it may be thought, when looked at individually, but it is an enormous one when regarded colectively, for, as every one knows, many a litle makes a mickle.

No one, after reading the first part of this paper, wil, we think, dare to say that there is not already in the field a dangerous clas of speling reformers,—a clas of literary revolutionists; and, as we sincerely deprecate a revolutionary species of speling reform, we earnestly apeal to conservative philologists to join us and act in time, like true philosophers, and by axepting the lesser of two evils agree to make such an amount of orthographical reform as wil bring the language into conformity with the wants of the period, and make it a more handy, as wel as a more potent agent in the march of intelectual development. And as we believe that the apointment of a Royal Comision, on the plan sugested one hundred and sixty seven years ago by Dean Swift, would be the simplest way of bringing about the much needed national orthographical reform, we urgently apeal to the Government to take the question into its imediate consideration.

If the scheme we propose for the consideration of intelectual men does not meet with their aproval, they have only to cal our atention to its shortcomings, and we shal readily take them into consideration, and modify, or remodel, the scheme as need be; for we are not in any way tied to any particular clas of views, and wil wilingly change our plans as we become more enlightened.

As al that we desire, for the present, is the introduction of the simple part of the scheme, the abolition of duplicated consonants,—while that portion of it is going forward,—there is plenty of time for the mature consideration of the most efectual way of working the second as wel as the more difficult third part of the scheme. We therefore earnestly invite criticism thereon, as out of a multitude of counselors cometh wisdom.

Here endeth the exposition of the first part of our scheme, and with the second as wel as with the third parts we are prepared to folow so soon as it apears to be advisable to do so.





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.



University Of California, Los Angeles



L 007 626 231 0

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 353 987 1

